

**Santa Clara County Public Health
Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Division**

1400 Parkmoor Avenue, Suite 120B, San Jose, CA 95126
408-793-2700 phone | 408-793-2731 fax
www.sccphd.org

Public Health Department

Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System



February 8, 2010

Andrew Crabtree
Principal Planner
Department of Planning, Building, & Code Enforcement
City of San Jose
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Mr. Crabtree and Members of the San Jose General Plan Task Force,

The Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Division of the Santa Clara County Public Health Department strongly endorses the inclusion of transportation policies that benefit the health of the population in the creation of the San Jose City General Plan. As you undoubtedly know, lack of physical activity is contributing to a national epidemic of obesity. Well designed transportation systems can help to increase physical activity while improving air quality and lowering the incidence of respiratory disease.

A study based on the National Household Travel Survey, a U. S. Department of Transportation telephone survey, found that Americans who used public transit spent about 19 minutes daily walking to and from transit (around 30% spent 30 minutes or more being physically active by walking to and from transit). A survey of a sample of New Jersey suburban train riders found that nearly 80% met the recommended guideline of 30 minutes of daily physical activity. Another study of over 10,000 Atlanta residents found that for each additional hour spent in a car per day there was an associated 6% increase in the likelihood of obesity. Each additional kilometer (.6 miles) walked per day was associated with nearly a 5% reduction in the odds of being obese.

Increased modes of active transportation (walking, biking, and the use of transit) can also lead to a reduction in air pollution, which is associated with cardiovascular disease and asthma attacks, and a decrease in pedestrian fatalities. A recent national study ranked San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA as the 26th most dangerous metro area for pedestrians (based on cities over 1 million in population).

Well designed and complete sidewalks, safe bike lanes and cross walks, traffic calming measures, pedestrian lighting, bike racks, and covered bus shelters are necessary to encourage walking and increase mass transit ridership. People are more likely to walk and to use mass transit if the barriers to safe walking are reduced. Many people live in neighborhoods without easy access to healthy, affordable food and health care, making it crucial that grocery stores and clinics be readily accessible.

We encourage you to consider the direct connection between transportation and the health of the residents of San Jose in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan M. Stuart".

Susan M. Stuart, MA, MPH
Health Planner
Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention
Santa Clara County Department of Public Health